

UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL

(Large Entity)

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))

Docket No.
FQ5-404

Total Pages in this Submission

TO THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS

Box Patent Application
Washington, D.C. 20231

Transmitted herewith for filing under 35 U.S.C. 111(a) and 37 C.F.R. 1.53(b) is a new utility patent application for an invention entitled:

AUTOMOBILE COMMUNICATIONS METHOD AND SYSTEM

and invented by:

Yasuharu Yoshida

If a **CONTINUATION APPLICATION**, check appropriate box and supply the requisite information:

☐ Continuation ☐ Divisional ☐ Continuation-in-part (CIP) of prior application No.: _____

Which is a:

☐ Continuation ☐ Divisional ☐ Continuation-in-part (CIP) of prior application No.: _____

Which is a:

☐ Continuation ☐ Divisional ☐ Continuation-in-part (CIP) of prior application No.: _____

Enclosed are:

Application Elements

1. ☐ Filing fee as calculated and transmitted as described below
2. ☒ Specification having 57 pages and including the following:
 - a. ☒ Descriptive Title of the Invention
 - b. ☐ Cross References to Related Applications (if applicable)
 - c. ☐ Statement Regarding Federally-sponsored Research/Development (if applicable)
 - d. ☐ Reference to Microfiche Appendix (if applicable)
 - e. ☒ Background of the Invention
 - f. ☒ Brief Summary of the Invention
 - g. ☒ Brief Description of the Drawings (if drawings filed)
 - h. ☒ Detailed Description
 - i. ☒ Claim(s) as Classified Below
 - j. ☒ Abstract of the Disclosure

UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL
(Large Entity)

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))

Docket No.
FQ5-404

Total Pages in this Submission

Application Elements (Continued)

3. ☒ Drawing(s) *(when necessary as prescribed by 35 USC 113)*
- a. ☐ Formal Number of Sheets _____
- b. ☒ Informal Number of Sheets 11 (Figs. 1-11)
4. ☒ Oath or Declaration
- a. ☐ Newly executed *(original or copy)* ☒ Unexecuted
- b. ☐ Copy from a prior application (37 CFR 1.63(d)) *(for continuation/divisional application only)*
- c. ☒ With Power of Attorney ☐ Without Power of Attorney
- d. ☐ DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)
Signed statement attached deleting inventor(s) named in the prior application,
see 37 C.F.R. 1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b).
5. ☐ Incorporation By Reference *(usable if Box 4b is checked)*
The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which a copy of the oath or declaration is supplied under
Box 4b, is considered as being part of the disclosure of the accompanying application and is hereby
incorporated by reference therein.
6. ☐ Computer Program in Microfiche *(Appendix)*
7. ☐ Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission *(if applicable, all must be included)*
- a. ☐ Paper Copy
- b. ☐ Computer Readable Copy *(identical to computer copy)*
- c. ☐ Statement Verifying Identical Paper and Computer Readable Copy

Accompanying Application Parts

8. ☐ Assignment Papers *(cover sheet & document(s))*
9. ☐ 37 CFR 3.73(B) Statement *(when there is an assignee)*
10. ☐ English Translation Document *(if applicable)*
11. ☐ Information Disclosure Statement/PTO-1449 ☐ Copies of IDS Citations
12. ☒ Preliminary Amendment
13. ☒ Acknowledgment postcard
14. ☐ Certificate of Mailing
- ☐ First Class ☐ Express Mail *(Specify Label No.):* _____

UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL
(Large Entity)

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))

Docket No.
FQ5-404

Total Pages in this Submission

Accompanying Application Parts (Continued)

15. ☐ Certified Copy of Priority Document(s) *(if foreign priority is claimed)*

16. ☐ Additional Enclosures *(please identify below):*

Fee Calculation and Transmittal

CLAIMS AS FILED

For	#Filed	#Allowed	#Extra	Rate	Fee
Total Claims	36	- 20 =	16	x \$18.00	\$288.00
Indep. Claims	3	- 3 =	0	x \$78.00	\$0.00
Multiple Dependent Claims (check if applicable) <input type="checkbox"/>					\$0.00
BASIC FEE					\$760.00
OTHER FEE <i>(specify purpose)</i>					\$0.00
TOTAL FILING FEE					\$1,048.00

- ☐ A check in the amount of _____ to cover the filing fee is enclosed.
- ☐ The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge and credit Deposit Account No. _____ as described below. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.
- ☐ Charge the amount of _____ as filing fee.
 - ☐ Credit any overpayment.
 - ☐ Charge any additional filing fees required under 37 C.F.R. 1.16 and 1.17.
 - ☐ Charge the issue fee set in 37 C.F.R. 1.18 at the mailing of the Notice of Allowance, pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.311(b).


Signature

Dated: July 7, 1999

Sean M. McGinn, Esq.
Registration No.: 34,386

CC:

Customer No.: 21254

FQ5-404

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re patent application of

Yoshida, Y.

Serial No.: Not Yet Assigned

Group Art Unit: Not Yet Assigned

Filing Date: Concurrently Herewith

Examiner: Unknown

For: AUTOMOBILE COMMUNICATIONS METHOD AND SYSTEM

Assistant Commissioner of Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Sir:

Prior to examination on the merits and calculation of the filing fee, please amend the above-identified application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 29, line 1, delete "or 28".

Please add the following new claims:

36. The fixed station according to claim 28, wherein the plurality of predetermined communication frequencies comprises a plurality of different pairs of a first frequency and a second frequency, and a reception local frequency for demodulating a received radio signal from the on-board mobile station is generated from the first frequency in accordance with a second predetermined conversion so that the reception local signal is frequency-coherent to the received radio signal from the on-board mobile station.

REMARKS

The above changes to the claims have been made, and new claims have been added, to delete multiple-dependency.

Please charge any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Attorney's

Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully submitted,

Sean M. H.

Sean M. McGinn
Registration No.: 34,386

Date: 11/1/99
McGinn & Gibb, P.C.
1701 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 100
Arlington, VA 22209
(703) 294-6699
Customer No. 21254

MCGINN & GIBB, P.C.
A PROFESSIONAL LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY
PATENTS, TRADEMARKS, COPYRIGHTS, AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW
1701 CLARENDON BOULEVARD, SUITE 100
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22209
TELEPHONE (703) 294-6699
FACSIMILE (703) 294-6696

**APPLICATION
FOR
UNITED STATES
LETTERS PATENT**

APPLICANT: Yasuharu Yoshida

**FOR: AUTOMOBILE COMMUNICATIONS
METHOD AND SYSTEM**

DOCKET NO.: FQ5-404

AUTOMOBILE COMMUNICATIONS METHOD AND SYSTEM

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the invention

The present invention relates to a mobile communications system, and, more particularly, to a communication system and method for mobile units moving on a road.

2. Description of the Related Art

Recently, studies have been made on various ITSs (Intelligent Transport Systems) to aim at improving the traffic safety and efficiency, traffic environment, etc. To realize such an ITS, it is essential to implement information transmission means, which is the functional core of the system, i.e., an automobile communications system which connects between vehicle-mounted mobile communication devices and roadside transceivers by radio.

Such an automobile communications system may be realized based on the existing mobile telephone system. One example of this automobile communications system is provided with roadside transceivers deployed along a road to segment the road into consecutive radio zones. Such a configuration allows continuous communication with an on-

FQ5-404

board transceiver of a vehicle running on the road while performing so-called hand-over. Each roadside transceiver is connected to a central station, which gathers information from vehicles and up-links it to a host station or gives information and instructions necessary for road travel to the vehicles. The hand-over command is usually sent from the central station.

A transmission center frequency f_{t1} and a reception center frequency f_{r1} are assigned to odd zones in the consecutive radio zones, and a transmission center frequency f_{t2} and a reception center frequency f_{r2} are assigned to even zones. The switching of the frequencies is performed to prevent interference between adjoining radio zones. For areas which geographically suffers intense radio wave interference, such as those where radio waves can reach very far, it is necessary to repeatedly assign three or more radio waves.

According to such an automobile communications system, when a vehicle moves from an odd radio zone 1 into an adjoining even radio zone 2, for example, the on-board transceiver should perform so-called hand-over by switching the opposite party from the roadside transceiver of the radio zone 1 to that of the radio zone 2. At this time, the transmission center frequency of the roadside transceiver changes from f_{t1} to f_{t2} , so that the reception center

FQ5-404

frequency of the on-board transceiver also changes from f_{t1} to f_{t2} . This requires that the oscillation frequency of the voltage controlled oscillator of the on-board transceiver should be switched to the center frequency necessary for synchronous detection and demodulation. At the same time, since the reception center frequency of the roadside transceiver changes from f_{r1} to f_{r2} , the transmission center frequency of the on-board transceiver must also be switched from f_{r1} to f_{r2} . When the vehicle enters an odd radio zone 3 from the even radio zone 2, likewise, the oscillation frequency of the voltage controlled oscillator of the on-board transceiver should be switched from f_{t2} to f_{t1} and the transmission center frequency should be switched from f_{r2} to f_{r1} .

As apparent from the above, the conventional automobile communications system necessitates switching of the oscillation frequencies of the voltage controlled oscillator of an on-board transceiver and a transmission local oscillator for every hand-over operation of changing the radio zones. In particular, accomplishing fast hand-over requires fast frequency switching, which increases the technical burden on an on-board transceiver. This results in an increased cost for the automobile communication system.

FQ5-404

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide an automobile communications system and method which can ensure fast hand-over without putting unnecessary burden on mobile stations.

It is another object of this invention to provide an automobile communications system and method which can permit continuous communication over a plurality of radio zones without switching the transmission and reception frequencies.

It is a further object of this invention to provide an automobile communications system and method which can maintain communication with an on-board transceiver while adequately handling changes in road condition.

To achieve the above objects, according to one aspect of this invention, there is provided an automobile communication method and system for on-board mobile station in a plurality of radio zones which are consecutively arranged along a road. Each of the radio zones are provided with a plurality of predetermined communication frequencies. A communication frequency used in each of the radio zones is controlled in time division scheme such that simultaneous transmission at a same communication frequency

FQ5-404

is not permitted in adjoining radio zones and different time slots are allocated for communications at a same communication frequency in adjoining radio zones. A time slot allocated to the on-board mobile station is switched
5 to continuously communicate with the on-board mobile station over the radio zones.

Since time division control is performed to sequentially use a plurality of communication frequencies on a time division basis so that the communication
10 frequencies in use do not overlap each other in adjoining radio zones and to allocate different time slots to communications at the same frequency over adjoining radio zones, the on-board transceiver can keep continuous communication over the radio zones while switching the time
15 slot allocated thereto. For example, the time slot can be switched in such a way that communication over radio zones is always carried out at the same communication frequency. Further, even if all time slots for a certain frequency are occupied, continuous communication can be maintained by
20 switching the communication frequency in use to another frequency.

According to another aspect of this invention, there is provided an automobile communication method between an on-board mobile station and a fixed station system in a
25 plurality of radio zones which are consecutively arranged

FQ5-404

along a road. Each of the radio zones is provided with a plurality of predetermined communication frequencies. A communication frequency used in each of the radio zones is controlled in time division scheme such that simultaneous transmission at a same communication frequency is not permitted in adjoining radio zones and different time slots are allocated for communications at a same communication frequency in adjoining radio zones. Continuous communication with the on-board mobile station is performed at a same communication frequency over the radio zones.

Since time division control is performed to sequentially use a plurality of communication frequencies on a time division basis so that the communication frequencies in use do not overlap each other over adjoining radio zones and different time slots are allocated to communications at the same frequency in a plurality of communication frequencies over adjoining radio zones, it is possible to accomplish continuous communication with a mobile station over a plurality of radio zones by using the same communication frequency. This can reduce the burden on the hardware on the mobile station side and can accomplish fast hand-over. Further, the burden for fast hand-over can be reduced by a plurality of communication frequencies in each radio zone being in a state of frequency-coherence.

FQ5-404

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a schematic block diagram of an automobile communication system according to a first embodiment of the present invention;

5 FIG. 2 is a time chart showing a time division format according to the first embodiment;

FIG. 3 is a block diagram illustrating the internal circuit structure of a roadside transceiver TRX according to the first embodiment;

10 FIG. 4 is a block diagram depicting the internal circuit structure of an on-board transceiver according to the first embodiment;

FIG. 5 is a simplified block diagram for explaining frequency coherence of the overall system according to the
15 first embodiment;

FIG. 6 is a block diagram exemplifying the internal structure of a control station in the system shown in FIG. 1;

FQ5-404

FIG. 7 is a time chart showing the time division format of TDD scheme in an automobile communications system according to a second embodiment of this invention;

FIG. 8 is a time chart showing the time division format of TDD scheme in an automobile communication system according to a third embodiment of this invention;

FIG. 9 is a block diagram illustrating the internal circuit structure of a roadside transceiver TRX according to the second and third embodiments based on the TDD system;

FIG. 10 is a block diagram illustrating the internal circuit structure of an on-board transceiver according to the second and third embodiments based on the TDD system; and

FIG. 11 is a time chart showing how time division switching of 3-wave frequencies is carried out by an automobile communication method according to a fourth embodiment of this invention.

FQ5-404

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Preferred embodiments of the present invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

5 Referring to FIG. 1, it is assumed that a plurality of radio zones RZ_1 , RZ_2 , RZ_3 and so forth are consecutively arranged on a road 10, each overlapping adjoining radio zones, and a vehicle 20 which runs on this road 10 has an on-board transceiver 21. Each radio zone is produced by its
10 associated roadside communication unit 30, which is controlled by a control station 40. It should be noted that the control station 40 may be a single central station which controls all the roadside communication units 30, or may take the form of a plurality of control stations which
15 perform distributed control on the roadside communication units 30. Alternatively, the control station 40 may be designed in such a manner as to implement hierarchical control on all the roadside communication units 30, which are separated into some groups, with control stations, each
20 controlling its associated group, and a general control station which performs the general control on those control stations.

More specifically, the radio zones RZ_1 , RZ_2 , RZ_3 and so forth are formed in association with roadside transceivers

FQ5-404

TRX_1 , TRX_2 , TRX_3 and so forth, and the control station 40 exchanges data and control signals with the individual roadside transceivers TRX and sends a reference frequency signal f_{REF} to the roadside transceivers TRXs. As will be
 5 discussed later, each roadside transceiver TRX generates two transmission reference carrier frequencies (f_{t1} , f_{t2}) from the reference frequency signal f_{REF} according to a predetermined conversion (n/m conversion in this example), and generates two reception reference frequencies (f_{r1} , f_{r2})
 10 from the transmission reference carrier frequencies (f_{t1} , f_{t2}) according to a predetermined conversion (here, n_r/m_r conversion). The predetermined conversion will be discussed later. Each roadside transceiver TRX switches the transmission and reception frequencies of the associated
 15 radio zone between f_{t1}/f_{r1} and f_{t2}/f_{r2} in accordance with timing control by the control station 40. The operation of this system will now be explained in more detail.

As shown in FIG. 2, in each radio zone, one period is divided into equal 12 time slots each of which is set to
 20 one channel. It is therefore possible to communicate with a maximum of 12 vehicles in a single radio zone.

In each radio zone, the transmission frequency f_{t1}/f_{t2} and the reception frequency f_{r1}/f_{r2} are switched once in a period in such a way as to differ from those of adjoining
 25 radio zones. More specifically, as shown in (1) to (3) in

FQ5-404

FIG. 2, in odd-numbered radio zones RZ_1 , RZ_3 , RZ_5 and so forth, the transmission frequency is f_{t1} and the reception frequency is f_{r1} in the first half (channels 1 to 6) of one period, but the transmission frequency is switched to f_{t2} and the reception frequency to f_{r2} in the second half (channels 7 to 12). In even-numbered radio zones RZ_2 , RZ_4 , RZ_6 and so forth, on the other hand, as shown in (4) to (6) in FIG. 2, while the transmission frequency is f_{t2} and the reception frequency is f_{r2} in the first half (channels 1 to 6) of one period, the transmission frequency is switched to f_{t1} and the reception frequency to f_{r1} in the second half (channels 7 to 12). Synchronously switching of the transmission and reception frequencies over all the radio zones this way prevents the transmission and reception frequencies of any radio zone from overlapping those of an adjoining radio zone. Such switching of the transmission and reception frequencies, which will be described specifically (see FIG. 3), is accomplished by switching a selector in synchronism with the channel timing under control of a data processor of a roadside transceiver.

A description will now be given of the channel allocation and transmission and reception operations in a case where the vehicle 20 enters the radio zone RZ_2 from the radio zone RZ_1 . In general, when the vehicle 20 enters a radio zone, one unused channel in the twelve channels is

FQ5-404

allocated through, for example, a control channel or the like. If every channel is usable, the channel 1 is allocated when the transmission frequency of the radio zone is f_{t1} , while the channel 7 is allocated when the transmission frequency of the radio zone is f_{t2} . In this example, it is assumed that the transmission and reception frequencies f_{t1}/f_{r1} are used in the radio zone RZ_1 and the channel 1 has been allocated to the vehicle 20.

While the vehicle 20 is moving in the radio zone RZ_1 , a frequency controller in the on-board transceiver 21 controls the oscillation frequency to f_{t1} to do the coherent detection of a radio signal received from the roadside transceiver TRX_1 as will be discussed later (see FIG. 4). Further, the oscillation frequency f_{t1} is converted to the frequency f_{r1} by an n_r/m_r converter, thus generating a vehicle-side transmission reference carrier. A modulator modulates the vehicle-side transmission reference carrier according to transmission data, and the radio transmission signal is sent to the roadside transceiver TRX_1 as a burst signal at the timing of the channel 1. In this manner, the on-board transceiver 21 and the roadside transceiver TRX_1 can communicate with each other over the channel 1 using the transmission and reception frequencies f_{t1}/f_{r1} .

When the vehicle 20 enters the even-numbered radio zone RZ_2 from the odd radio zone RZ_1 in this situation, the

FQ5-404

opposite party of the on-board transceiver 21 is switched to the roadside transceiver TRX_2 from the roadside transceiver TRX_1 . Specifically, when the vehicle 20 moves into the radio zone RZ_2 , the roadside transceiver TRX_2

5 allocates to the on-board transceiver 21 the channel that uses the same transmission and reception frequencies f_{t1}/f_{r1} as those of the radio zone RZ_1 . It is assumed here that the channel 7 has been allocated to the on-board transceiver 21.

The transmission and reception frequencies in use are 10 f_{t1}/f_{r1} , the same as those of the radio zone RZ_1 , wherein the transmission frequency f_{t1} has been generated in any roadside transceiver TRX from the reference frequency signal f_{REF} supplied from the control station 40 according to a predetermined conversion (here, n/m conversion).

15 Therefore, the transmission frequencies are in a frequency-coherence state. The details of frequency coherence will be discussed later.

The local frequency f_{r1} to be given to a demodulator has been produced from the transmission frequency f_{t1} 20 according to a predetermined conversion (n_r/m_r conversion), and a local frequency for transmission (roadside reception frequency) f_{r1} is also produced in the on-board transceiver 21 from the local frequency for demodulation (roadside transmission frequency) f_{t1} using the same predetermined 25 conversion (n_r/m_r conversion). The use of the same

FQ5-404

predetermined conversion between the roadside transceiver and the on-board transceiver can set the overall system in a frequency-coherence state, so that the demodulators of the roadside transceiver TRX and the on-board transceiver
5 21 can achieve extremely rapid synchronization acquisition.

The opposite party of the on-board transceiver 21 is quickly switched to the roadside transceiver TRX₂ from the roadside transceiver TRX₁ in this manner, and can communicate with the on-board transceiver 21 over the
10 channel 7 in the radio zone RZ₂ using the same transmission and reception frequencies f_{r1}/f_{t1} . Specifically, assuming that the length of each radio zone along the road 10 is about 100 m and the overlapped length of the adjoining radio zones is about 10 m, the hand-over in a fast running
15 state should be completed in a short period of several tens to several hundred milliseconds. As mentioned earlier, fast hand-over can be accomplished by rendering the entire system in a frequency-coherence state.

Even if the vehicle 20 runs on the road 10 and hand-over is repeated over the consecutive radio zones RZ₁, RZ₂, RZ₃ and so forth, the communication frequencies are always kept at the initial transmission and reception frequencies f_{r1}/f_{t1} and only the communication channel is switched
20 between the channels 1 and 7 every time hand-over takes
25 place. The control station 40 can control switching of the

FQ5-404

transmission and reception frequencies while the roadside communication unit 30 can control switching of the communication channel of the on-board transceiver 21.

Alternatively, the control station 40 can control both
5 switching of the transmission and reception frequencies and switching of the communication channel of the on-board transceiver 21.

FIG. 3 illustrates the internal circuit of the roadside transceiver TRX. An antenna 101 which produces a
10 radio zone is connected via a duplexer 102 to a demodulator and a modulator 104. The demodulator 103 and modulator 104 are connected to a data processor 105, which is connected via an interface circuit 106 to the control station 40. In the case where the control station 40 is connected to the
15 individual roadside transceivers TRX by optical fibers, for example, the interface circuit 106 performs conversion between an optical signal and an electrical signal.

When receiving a data signal to be sent to the transceiver 21 of the vehicle 20 from the control station
20 40, the data processor 105 of the roadside transceiver TRX extracts a signal to be sent by the roadside transceiver TRX itself, produces a transmission baseband signal according to the signal format which has the time slots shown in FIG. 2, and sends the baseband signal to the
25 modulator 104. When receiving a reception baseband signal

FQ5-404

from the demodulator 103, the data processor 105 converts it into a signal format for transmission to the control station 40, and sends the converted signal via the interface circuit 106 to the control station 40.

5 The reference frequency signal f_{REF} supplied from the control station 40 is converted by an n_1/m_1 converter 107 and an n_2/m_2 converter 108 according to predetermined conversions, or it is subjected to n_1/m_1 conversion and n_2/m_2 conversion, yielding two transmission reference carriers of
10 frequencies f_{t1} and f_{t2} . Those transmission reference carriers undergo conversion according to a predetermined conversion or n_x/m_x conversion by n_x/m_x converters 109 and 110, yielding two reception reference signals of
15 frequencies f_{r1} and f_{r2} . Here, n , m , n_x and m_x are all integers.

Each of the n_1/m_1 converter 107, the n_2/m_2 converter 108 and the n_x/m_x converters 109 and 110 is constituted by a phase-locked loop (PLL) circuit, and well-known PLL synthesizers may be used for the converters. In this
20 example, the respective communication frequencies used in this embodiment can be obtained by setting the frequency dividing ratios (n , m) of the PLL synthesizers to (n_1, m_1) , (n_2, m_2) and (n_x, m_x) .

The reception reference carriers f_{r1} and f_{r2} are sent
25 from the n_x/m_x converters 109 and 110 to a selector 111

FQ5-404

which selects one of the reception reference carriers according to a select control signal from the data processor 105. The selected reception reference signal f_{r1}/f_{r2} has its phase adjusted by a phase shifter 112, and is
 5 then sent as a reception reference signal to the demodulator 103. The demodulator 103 performs synchronous detection of a radio received signal using the reception reference signal f_{r1}/f_{r2} , yielding the reception baseband signal. A phase controller 113 controls the phase shifter
 10 112 based on the output of the demodulator 103 in such a way that the demodulator 103 acquires synchronization, thereby adjusting the phase of the reception reference signal.

The two transmission reference carriers of frequencies
 15 f_{t1} and f_{t2} are sent from the n_1/m_1 converter 107 and n_2/m_2 converter 108 to a selector 114, which selects one of the transmission reference reference carriers according to a select control signal from the data processor 105. The selected transmission reference carrier f_{t1}/f_{t2} is sent to
 20 the modulator 104 where it is modulated in accordance with the transmission baseband signal from the data processor 105. The select control signals for operating the selectors 111 and 114 are produced in accordance with control signals from the control station 40.

25 In every roadside transceiver TRX in this system, as

FQ5-404

apparent from the above, the reception reference signals f_{r1} and f_{r2} are generated by subjecting the transmission reference carriers f_{t1} and f_{t2} to conversion according to a predetermined conversion or n/m conversion. Therefore,

5 those generated reception reference signals f_{r1} and f_{r2} are also frequency-coherent between the roadside transceivers TRX. Any modulation scheme may be used in the embodiment. For example, ASK, BPSK and QPSK may appear adequate, which are in no way restrictive.

10 FIG. 4 depicts the internal circuit of the on-board transceiver. The on-board transceiver 21 communicates with the roadside transceiver TRX via an antenna 201. A radio signal received by the antenna 201 is input to a demodulator 203 via a duplexer 202. The demodulator 203

15 performs synchronous detection of the received radio signal, and sends the retimed data signal to a data processor 204. On the other hand, a transmission data signal from the data processor 204 is output to a modulator 205, which modulates the transmission reference carrier based on the

20 transmission data signal and sends the resultant signal to a gate circuit 206. The gate circuit 206 is opened or closed by a gate control signal from the data processor 204, generating a burst signal at the timing that matches the signal format as shown in FIG. 2, and sends the burst

25 signal to the duplexer 202.

FQ5-404

The regenerated reference carrier which is need for synchronous detection in the demodulator 203 is produced by a voltage controlled oscillator (VCO) 207 and a control section 208. More specifically, the control section 208 receives the received data signal or the output of the demodulator 203, performs a logical operation on the received data signal, and sends a control voltage V_{icon} to the VCO 207 in such a way that the demodulator 203 acquires synchronization. The VCO 207 regenerates the reception reference carrier of the frequency f_{r1}/f_{r2} , which matches the transmission frequency from the roadside transceiver TRX, in accordance with the control voltage V_{icon} and sends the reception reference carrier to the demodulator 203.

The output of the VCO 207 is subjected to conversion according to the same predetermined conversion as used on the roadside transceiver, i.e., n_r/m_r conversion, yielding the transmission reference carrier of the f_{r1}/f_{r2} which is the same as the reception reference frequency for demodulation in the roadside transceiver TRX. The modulator 205 receives this transmission reference carrier f_{r1}/f_{r2} and modulates it according to transmission data, yielding a radio transmission signal. An n_r/m_r converter 209, like the n_z/m_z converter 108 and the n_r/m_r converters 109 and 110, is constituted by a phase-locked loop (PLL) circuit, and a well-known PLL synthesizer may be used for the converter.

FQ5-404

The data processor 204 extracts data assigned to its transceiver from the received data, and performs data processing on the data for display on a monitor 210 or sends necessary information to a control section 211 of the vehicle 20. The control section 211 controls various devices mounted on the vehicle 20 in accordance with the received information.

A response to the received information or detection signals from sensors mounted on the vehicle 20 are sent via the control section 211 to the data processor 204, producing transmission data. Then, a burst signal is produced at the timing of the allocated channel and is sent to the roadside transceiver TRX.

As explained above, while the vehicle 20 is running in the radio zone RZ_1 , communication is carried out at the transmission and reception frequencies f_{t1}/f_{r1} over the channel 1 under the time division control on the communication frequencies and channels as shown in FIG. 2. When the vehicle 20 enters the radio zone RZ_2 , communication is carried out at the transmission and reception frequencies f_{t1}/f_{r1} over the channel 7. That is, from the viewpoint of the on-board transceiver 21, communication is performed over the channel 1 while the vehicle 20 is moving in an odd-numbered radio zone and it is performed over the channel 7 while the vehicle 20 is moving in an even-

FQ5-404

numbered radio zone. In either case, the transmission and reception frequencies in use are the initially set f_{t1} and f_{r1} . Although the transmission and reception frequencies f_{t1}/f_{r1} are the same, the time division control is performed

5 to make the transmission and reception frequencies different between adjoining radio zones. It is thus possible to avoid interference of the communication frequencies. With different frequencies, interference can be eliminated by a filter as in the prior art so that no
10 problem would arise.

Again, two transmission frequencies f_{t1} and f_{t2} are used in a time-division manner and are not transmitted simultaneously. Accordingly, the transmission power and its peak signal component are the same as those of the
15 transmission signal in the prior art, so that the performances that are demanded of the transmitter, such as the transmission power and non-linear distortion characteristic at the operational point can be the same as those of the prior art.

20 As frequency coherence is implemented over adjoining radio zones, the time required for establishing carrier synchronization in the demodulator 203 of the on-board transceiver 21 can be extremely short, resulting in fast synchronization. In other words, since the received signal
25 is frequency-coherent to the regenerated reference carrier,

FQ5-404

the phase control by the control section 208 is merely needed to acquire synchronization, thus ensuring fast demodulation.

Frequency coherence will be discussed more specifically. To begin with, a plurality of frequency-coherent signals mean signals which are obtained through n/m conversion of one reference frequency signal by a plurality of n/m converters having the same frequency dividing ratio. Even with the use of PLL synthesizers all having the same frequency dividing ratio, frequency division would cause unsettling of phase and would result in an error of several Hz among the actually obtained frequencies. With the error of such a level, however, the demodulator can acquire synchronization very fast by the ordinary phase control or frequency control. Therefore, the aforementioned fast hand-over can be achieved by putting the entire system on the frequency-coherence state.

Referring to FIG. 5, the transmission reference frequency signals (f_t) that are generated in the individual roadside transceivers TRX are what is obtained by the same n/m conversion of the reference frequency f_{REF} supplied from the control station 40. Therefore, those transmission reference frequency signals are frequency-coherent.

In the on-board transceiver 21 which has received a radio signal from the roadside transceiver TRX, the

FQ5-404

reception reference frequency f_t is regenerated from the received radio signal without frequency division, and is supplied to the demodulator 203. The reception regenerated reference signal (reception LO) is thus phase-locked to the received signal from the roadside transceiver TRX. This reception regenerated reference signal f_t is subjected to n_r/m_r conversion in the n_r/m_r converter 209 which has the same frequency dividing ratio as that of the roadside transceiver TRX, producing transmission reference signal (transmission LO) of the frequency f_r .

As seen from the demodulator 103 of the roadside transceiver TRX, therefore, the reference signal for demodulation is a signal of the frequency f_r obtained by n_r/m_r conversion of the transmission reference frequency f_t and the signal received from the on-board transceiver 21 is a signal of the frequency f_r obtained by n_r/m_r conversion of the same reception regeneration reference signal f_t . That is, the reference signal (reception LO) for demodulation of the demodulator 103 and the received signal are two signals that have been obtained by n_r/m_r conversion of the signal of the frequency f_t , and they are frequency-coherent to each other. It is therefore possible to implement fast demodulation through mere phase control that is carried out by the phase shifter 112 and the phase controller 113.

As apparent from the above, hand-over can be completed

FQ5-404

quickly by frequency-coherence in the entire system that comprises all the roadside transceivers TRXs and the on-board transceiver 21.

FIG. 6 shows an example of the control station in the system shown in FIG. 1. Hereinafter, there will be described a case where the control station performs centralized control on the roadside transceivers TRXs.

The control station 40 is provided with a communication controller 301 in order to exchange data and control signals with the individual roadside communication units 30. In the case where the control station 40 is connected to the individual roadside transceivers TRXs by optical fibers, for example, the communication controller 301 includes an interface which performs conversion between an optical signal and an electrical signal.

Data that is exchanged with the on-board transceiver 21 is processed by a data processor 302, and control signals are processed by a system controller 303. The system controller 303 executes control such as switching of the transmission and reception frequencies of each radio zone as shown in FIG. 2 by, for example, running a system program stored in a memory 304. In place of the roadside communication unit 30, the system controller 303 of the control station 40 may control the aforementioned switching of the communication channel to the on-board transceiver 21.

FQ5-404

The system controller 303 controls a reference frequency generator 305 to generate the aforementioned reference frequency f_{REF} and supplies the reference frequency f_{REF} to each roadside communication unit 30.

5 Although the transmission frequency and the reception frequency are separate in the above-described embodiment, transmission and reception can be implemented at the same frequency in a time division manner as will be discussed below. This method is known as TDD (Time Division Duplex).

10 FIG. 7 shows a TDD format according to a second embodiment of this invention, wherein (1) and (2) show frequency allocation to odd-numbered radio zones while (3) and (4) show frequency allocation to even-numbered radio zones.

15 As illustrated in the figure, in each radio zone, one period is divided into equal 24 time slots and the first half channels 1 to 12 are used for roadside transmission (reception on the on-board transceiver side) while the second half channels 13 to 24 are used for roadside

20 reception (transmission on the on-board transceiver side). It is therefore possible to communicate with a maximum of 12 vehicles in a single radio zone. Further, in each radio zone, the communication frequency is switched between f_{t1} and f_{t2} three times in one period in such a way as to avoid
25 overlapping of the communication frequency over adjoining

FQ5-404

radio zones.

More specifically, in the odd-numbered radio zones RZ_1 , RZ_3 , RZ_5 and so forth, the communication frequency f_{c1} is used in the first half (channels 1 to 6) of the channels 1 to 12 that are used for roadside transmission (reception on the on-board transceiver side), and the communication frequency is switched to f_{c2} in the second half (channels 7 to 12). Likewise, the communication frequency f_{c1} is used again in the first half (channels 13 to 18) of the channels 13 to 24 that are used for roadside reception (transmission on the on-board transceiver side), and the communication frequency is switched to f_{c2} in the second half (channels 19 to 24).

In even-numbered radio zones RZ_2 , RZ_4 , RZ_6 and so forth, on the other hand, while the transmission frequency f_{t2} is used in the first half (channels 1 to 6) of the channels 1 to 12 that are used for roadside transmission (reception on the on-board transceiver side), and the transmission frequency is switched to f_{t1} in the second half (channels 7 to 12). Likewise, the communication frequency f_{t2} is used again in the first half (channels 13 to 18) of the channels 13 to 24 that are used for roadside reception (transmission on the on-board transceiver side), and the communication frequency is switched to f_{t1} in the second half (channels 19 to 24). Synchronous switching of the communication

FQ5-404

frequency over all the radio zones this way prevents the communication frequency of any radio zone from overlapping that of an adjoining radio zone.

A description will now be given of the channel allocation and transmission and reception operations in this embodiment in a case where the vehicle 20 enters the radio zone RZ_2 from the radio zone RZ_1 . Generally, when the vehicle 20 enters a radio zone, two channels in the 24 channels are allocated as transmission and reception channels. If every channel is usable, the channels 1 and 13 are allocated when the communication frequency of the radio zone is f_{t1} , while the channels 7 and 19 are allocated when the communication frequency of the radio zone is f_{t2} . In this example, it is assumed that the communication frequency f_{t1} is used in the radio zone RZ_1 and the channels 1 and 13 have been allocated to the vehicle 20, as shown in (1) and (2) in FIG. 7.

While the vehicle 20 is moving in the radio zone RZ_1 , the frequency controller in the on-board transceiver 21 sets the oscillation frequency of the VCO to f_{t1} and the demodulator performs synchronous detection of a radio signal from the roadside transceiver TRX_1 . The data processor inputs the output of the demodulator as reception data on the channel 1. The oscillation frequency f_{t1} of the VCO is used directly as the transmission reference carrier.

FQ5-404

That is, the modulator modulates the transmission reference carrier with transmission data, and the radio transmission signal is sent to the roadside transceiver TRX_1 as a burst signal of the timing of the channel 13. In this manner, the on-board transceiver 21 and the roadside transceiver TRX_1 can communicate with each other over the channels 1 and 13 using the communication frequency f_{c1} .

When the vehicle 20 enters the even-numbered radio zone RZ_2 from the odd-numbered radio zone RZ_1 under this circumstance, the opposite party of the on-board transceiver 21 is switched to the roadside transceiver TRX_2 from the roadside transceiver TRX_1 . Specifically, when the vehicle 20 moves into the radio zone RZ_2 , the roadside transceiver TRX_2 allocates two channels that use the same communication frequency f_{c1} as that of the radio zone RZ_1 to the on-board transceiver 21. It is assumed here that the channels 7 and 19 have been allocated to the on-board transceiver 21 as shown in (3) and (4) in FIG. 7.

The communication frequency in use is f_{c1} , which is the same as that of the radio zone RZ_1 , and the communication frequency f_{c1} has been generated in any roadside transceiver TRX through n_1/m_1 conversion of the reference frequency signal f_{REF} from the control station 40. Therefore, the demodulator of the on-board transceiver 21 can accomplish extremely fast synchronous detection as mentioned above.

FQ5-404

That is, synchronous detection can be implemented merely by the control on the VCO by the frequency controller. The on-board transceiver 21 thus communicates with the roadside transceiver TRX₂ over the channels 7 and 19 using the communication frequency f_{t1} .

Even if the vehicle 20 runs on the road 10 and hand-over is repeated over the consecutive radio zones RZ₁, RZ₂, RZ₃ and so forth, the communication frequency is always kept at the initial transmission/reception frequency f_{t1}/f_{r1} and only the communication channels are switched between the channels 1 and 13 and the channels 7 and 19 every time hand-over takes place. Since the communication frequency is frequency-coherent over the entire system, fast hand-over can be achieved as mentioned earlier.

FIG. 8 shows a TDD format according to a third embodiment of this invention, wherein (1) and (2) show frequency allocation to odd-numbered radio zones while (3) and (4) show frequency allocation to even-numbered radio zones.

In this embodiment, one period is divided into equal 24 time slots, and in each radio zone, the communication frequency is switched between f_{t1} and f_{t2} once in one period in such a way as to avoid overlapping of the communication frequency over adjoining radio zones. Further, the first half of the period of the same communication frequency is

FQ5-404

used for the roadside transmission (reception on the on-board transceiver) and the second half of that period is used for the roadside reception (transmission on the on-board transceiver).

- 5 More specifically, in the odd-numbered radio zones RZ_1 , RZ_3 , RZ_5 and so forth, the communication frequency f_{t1} is used in the first half channels 1 to 12 of one period, and the communication frequency is switched to f_{t2} in the second half channels 13 to 24. Further, the first half channels 1 to 6 of the channels 1 to 12 for which the communication frequency f_{t1} is used are used for roadside transmission (reception on the on-board transceiver side), while the second half channels 7 to 12 are used for roadside reception (transmission on the on-board transceiver side).
- 10 Likewise, the first half channels 13 to 18 of the channels 13 to 24 for which the communication frequency f_{t2} is used are used for roadside transmission (reception on the on-board transceiver side), while the second half channels 19 to 24 are used for roadside reception (transmission on the on-board transceiver side).
- 15
- 20

- In the even-numbered radio zones RZ_2 , RZ_4 , RZ_6 and so forth, on the other hand, the communication frequency f_{t2} is used in the first half channels 1 to 12 of one period, and the communication frequency is switched to f_{t1} in the second half channels 13 to 24. As in the odd-numbered radio zones,
- 25

FQ5-404

the first half channels 1 to 6 of the channels 1 to 12 for which the communication frequency f_{t2} is used are used for roadside transmission (reception on the on-board transceiver side), while the second half channels 7 to 12 are used for roadside reception (transmission on the on-board transceiver side). Likewise, the first half channels 13 to 18 of the channels 13 to 24 for which the communication frequency f_{t1} is used are used for roadside transmission (reception on the on-board transceiver side), while the second half channels 19 to 24 are used for roadside reception (transmission on the on-board transceiver side). Synchronous switching of the communication frequency over all the radio zones this way prevents the communication frequency of any radio zone from overlapping that of an adjoining radio zone.

A description will now be given of the channel allocation and transmission and reception operations in this embodiment in a case where the vehicle 20 enters the radio zone RZ_2 from the radio zone RZ_1 . Generally, when the vehicle 20 enters a radio zone, two channels in the 24 channels are allocated as transmission and reception channels. If every channel is usable, the channels 1 and 7 are allocated when the communication frequency of the radio zone is f_{t1} , while the channels 13 and 19 are allocated when the communication frequency of the radio zone is f_{t2} . In

FQ5-404

this example, it is assumed that the communication frequency f_{c1} is used in the radio zone RZ_1 and the channels 1 and 7 have been allocated to the vehicle 20, as shown in (1) and (2) in FIG. 8.

5 While the vehicle 20 is moving in the radio zone RZ_1 , the frequency controller in the on-board transceiver 21 sets the oscillation frequency of the VCO to f_{c1} and the demodulator performs synchronous detection of a radio signal from the roadside transceiver TRX_1 . The data
10 processor inputs the output of the demodulator as reception data on the channel 1. The oscillation frequency f_{c1} of the VCO is used directly as the transmission reference carrier. That is, the modulator modulates the transmission reference carrier with transmission data, and the radio transmission
15 signal is sent to the roadside transceiver TRX_1 as a burst signal of the timing of the channel 7. In this manner, the on-board transceiver 21 and the roadside transceiver TRX_1 can communicate with each other over the channels 1 and 7 using the communication frequency f_{c1} .

20 When the vehicle 20 enters the even-numbered radio zone RZ_2 from the odd-numbered radio zone RZ_1 under this circumstance, the opposite party of the on-board transceiver 21 is switched to the roadside transceiver TRX_2 from the roadside transceiver TRX_1 . Specifically, when the
25 vehicle 20 moves into the radio zone RZ_2 , the roadside

FQ5-404

transceiver TRX_2 allocates two channel that use the same communication frequency f_{t1} as that of the radio zone RZ_{1p} to the on-board transceiver 21. It is assumed here that the channels 13 and 19 have been allocated to the on-board transceiver 21 as shown in (3) and (4) in FIG. 8.

The communication frequency in use is f_{t1} , which is the same as that of the radio zone RZ_1 , and the communication frequency f_{t1} has been generated in any roadside transceiver TRX through n_1/m_1 conversion of the reference frequency signal f_{REF} from the control station 40. Therefore, the demodulator of the on-board transceiver 21 can accomplish extremely fast synchronization acquisition as mentioned above. That is, synchronous detection can be implemented merely by the control on the VCO by the frequency controller. The on-board transceiver 21 thus communicates with the roadside transceiver TRX_2 over the channels 13 and 19 using the communication frequency f_{t1} .

Even if the vehicle 20 runs on the road 10 and hand-over is repeated over the consecutive radio zones RZ_1 , RZ_2 , RZ_3 and so forth, the communication frequency is always kept at the initial transmission/reception frequency f_{t1}/f_{r1} and only the communication channels are switched between the channels 1 and 7 and the channels 13 and 19 every time hand-over takes place. Since the communication frequency is frequency-coherent over the entire system, fast hand-over

FQ5-404

can be achieved as mentioned earlier.

FIG. 9 illustrates the internal circuit of a TDD-type roadside transceiver according to the second and third embodiments. To avoid the redundant description, similar or same reference numerals are given to those circuit blocks in FIG. 9, which are the same as the corresponding circuits shown in FIG. 3. Since the TDD type roadside transceiver uses only the communication frequencies f_{t1} and f_{t2} as mentioned earlier, the n_x/m_x converters 109 and 110 in FIG. 3 are unnecessary. Thus, the selector 111 selects either the communication frequency f_{t1} or f_{t2} and supplies the selected communication frequency to the demodulator 103 via the phase shifter 112. The data processor 105 has a TDMA/TDD channel control capability, and controls the selectors 111 and 114 according to the timing illustrated in FIG. 6 or FIG. 7. Further, a gate circuit 115 which is used to produce a transmission burst signal may be controlled by the data processor 105. The other structure and operation are the same as those of the roadside transceiver shown in FIG. 3.

FIG. 10 illustrates the internal circuit of a TDD type on-board transceiver according to the second and third embodiments. To avoid the redundant description, similar or same reference numerals are given to those blocks in this figure which are the same as the corresponding circuits

FQ5-404

shown in FIG. 4. Because the TDD type on-board transceiver uses only the communication frequencies f_{t1} and f_{t2} as mentioned earlier, the n_r/m_r converter 209 in FIG. 4 becomes unnecessary. Thus, the reception reference frequency f_{t1}/f_{t2} that has been regenerated by the VCO 207 is used directly as the transmission reference frequency of the modulator 205. The other structure and operation are the same as those of the on-board transceiver shown in FIG. 4.

Although the first embodiment has been described with reference to a case of using two transmission frequencies and two reception frequencies and the second and third embodiments have been discussed with reference to a case of using two communication frequencies, the number of frequencies in use can be increased when intense radio interference occurs due to the geographic conditions. With three communication frequencies in use, for example, four channels are to be allocated per frequency. In this case, transmission at the same frequency and in the same time slot does not take place over the consecutive three radio zones.

FIG. 11 shows how time division switching of three frequencies is carried out according to a fourth embodiment of this invention. In FIG. 11, the distance along the road 10 is represented by the horizontal axis thereof and the time is represented by the vertical axis. Thus, the radio

FQ5-404

zones RZ_1 , RZ_2 , RZ_3 and so forth are arranged along the horizontal axis, and the time slots or channels are periodically arranged on the vertical axis.

As shown in FIG. 11, in each radio zone, the transmission and reception frequencies are switched twice in one period in a predetermined order. Specifically, the transmission frequencies $f_{t1}/f_{t2}/f_{t3}$ and the reception frequencies $f_{r1}/f_{r2}/f_{r3}$ in each radio zone are sequentially switched from one to another so that they differ from the frequencies in an adjoining radio zone. In the $(3n+1)$ -th radio zones RZ_1 , RZ_4 , RZ_7 and so forth, as shown in FIG. 11, the transmission and reception frequencies f_{t1}/f_{r1} are used over the channels 1 to 4, the transmission and reception frequencies f_{t2}/f_{r2} are used over the channels 5 to 8, and the transmission and reception frequencies f_{t3}/f_{r3} are used over the channels 9 to 12 (where n is an integer equal to or greater than 0). In the $(3n+2)$ -th radio zones RZ_2 , RZ_5 , RZ_8 and so forth, the transmission and reception frequencies f_{t2}/f_{r2} are used over the channels 1 to 4, the transmission and reception frequencies f_{t3}/f_{r3} are used over the channels 5 to 8, and the transmission and reception frequencies f_{t1}/f_{r1} are used over the channels 9 to 12. In the $(3n+3)$ -th radio zones RZ_3 , RZ_6 , RZ_9 and so forth, the transmission and reception frequencies f_{t3}/f_{r3} are used over the channels 1 to 4, the transmission and reception frequencies f_{t1}/f_{r1} are

FQ5-404

used over the channels 5 to 8, and the transmission and reception frequencies f_{t2}/f_{r2} are used over the channels 9 to 12. Synchronous switching of the transmission and reception frequencies over all the radio zones this way prevents the communication frequencies of any radio zone from overlapping those of an adjoining radio zone.

The number of channels per period and allocation of channels to the communication frequencies in each radio zone are in no way limited to those of the above-described fourth embodiment. Any channel quantity and channel allocation are possible as long as conditions for allocating different time slots to adjoining radio zones with respect to the same frequency are satisfied.

The fourth embodiment is similar to the first embodiment in that the transmission frequencies $f_{t1}/f_{t2}/f_{t3}$ are generated from the reference frequency signal f_{REF} given from the control station 40 according to a predetermined conversion (n/m conversion) and the reception frequencies $f_{r1}/f_{r2}/f_{r3}$ are generated from those transmission frequencies according to a predetermined conversion (n_x/m_x conversion) and those frequencies are in the frequency-coherence state.

The present invention is not restricted to the above-described embodiments. Although the foregoing description of those embodiments has been given with reference to a case where the vehicle 20 runs fast on the road 10, the

FQ5-404

vehicle may move slowly or may be stopped on the road depending on the traffic conditions. The number of vehicles tends to increase in a radio zone at a point where roads merge, whereas that number tends to decrease at a point where a road branches. Therefore, the number of vehicles that are covered by a certain communication frequency in a certain radio zone may always vary. There is a possibility that a communication request may further be made by hand-over at the frequency for which no channel allocation is available. The present invention can flexibly cope with such a case by allocating channels for another frequency.

This will be discussed more specifically, taking the system of the first embodiment shown in FIG. 2 as an example. Suppose that the on-board transceiver 21 has been communicating over the channel 1 of the frequency f_{t1} in an odd-numbered radio zone and has entered an even-numbered radio zone. In this case, the channel 7 of the same frequency f_{t1} of the even-numbered radio zone should be allocated as described above, but if the channels 7 to 12 of the frequency f_{t1} of the even-numbered radio zone are already used, channels of another frequency f_{t2} can be allocated.

When the frequency is changed at the time of hand-over, frequency switching is carried out by the VCO 207, the control section 208 and the demodulator 203 of the on-board

FQ5-404

transceiver 21. With the vehicle 20 moving slowly, however, such fast frequency switching is not needed so that no problem would arise.

In the above-described embodiments, each roadside communication unit 30 converts the reference frequency signal f_{REF} according to a predetermined conversion (n/m conversion) to achieve the frequency coherence of the transmission frequencies over the radio zones. This conversion is not restrictive, and complete frequency coherence over the radio zones can be achieved by generating the transmission and reception frequencies f_{t1} and f_{t2} through conversion (e.g., multiplication) which does not include frequency division of the reference frequency signal f_{REF} from the control station 40. It is to be noted however that as the reception frequencies f_{r1} and f_{r2} have undergone n/m conversion, they are in the frequency coherence state over the radio zones.

In particular, as the TDD systems shown in FIGS. 7 and 8 execute transmission and reception at the communication frequencies f_{t1}/f_{t2} , complete frequency coherence over the entire system can be achieved by generating the communication frequencies f_{t1} and f_{t2} through conversion (e.g., multiplication) which does not include frequency division of the reference frequency signal f_{REF} from the control station 40 or a phase locking circuit which

FQ5-404

involves no frequency division. For example, the n_1/m_1 converter 107 and the n_2/m_2 converter 108 in the roadside communication unit shown in FIG. 9 have only to be replaced with multipliers of different multiplying factors.

5 As described above, since time division control is performed to sequentially use a plurality of communication frequencies on a time division basis so that the communication frequencies in use do not overlap each other over adjoining radio zones, and communication at the same
10 frequency in a plurality of predetermined communication frequencies over adjoining radio zones is allocated to different time slots, an on-board mobile station can keep continuous communication over radio zones by switching the time slots from one to another. For example, the time slots
15 can be switched in such a way that communication over radio zones is always carried out at the same communication frequency. Further, even if every time slot for a certain frequency is used, continuous communication can be maintained by switching the time slots to those for another
20 frequency.

Since continuous communication with a mobile unit over a plurality of radio zones can be ensured by using the same communication frequency, the burden on the hardware of the mobile unit can be reduced and what is more, fast hand-over
25 can be accomplished.

FQ5-404

Further, the burden for fast hand-over can be reduced by frequency coherence of a plurality of communication frequencies in each radio zone.

Although only four embodiments of the present invention have been described herein, it should be apparent to those skilled in the art that the present invention may be embodied in many other specific forms without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention. Therefore, the present embodiments and examples are to be considered as illustrative and not restrictive and the invention is not to be limited to the details given herein, but may be modified within the scope of the appended claims.

FQ5-404

Claims:

1. An automobile communications method for an on-board mobile station in a plurality of radio zones which are consecutively arranged along a road, comprising the steps of:

- 5 providing each of the radio zones with a plurality of predetermined communication frequencies;
- controlling a communication frequency used in each of the radio zones in time division scheme such that simultaneous transmission at a same communication frequency
- 10 is not permitted in adjoining radio zones and different time slots are allocated for communications at a same communication frequency in adjoining radio zones; and
- switching a time slot allocated to the on-board mobile station to continuously communicate with the on-
- 15 board mobile station over the radio zones.

2. The automobile communication method according to claim 1, wherein the time slot used for communication with the on-board mobile station is switched in such a manner that communication with the on-board mobile station is
- 20 continuously performed at a same communication frequency over the radio zones.

FQ5-404

3. The automobile communication method according to claim 1, wherein the time slot is switched in such a manner that communication with the on-board mobile station is continuously performed at different communication frequencies over the radio zones.

4. An automobile communications method between an on-board mobile station and a fixed station system in a plurality of radio zones which are consecutively arranged along a road, comprising the steps of:

10 providing each of the radio zones with a plurality of predetermined communication frequencies; controlling a communication frequency used in each of the radio zones in time division scheme such that simultaneous transmission at a same communication frequency is not permitted in adjoining radio zones and different time slots are allocated for communications at a same communication frequency in adjoining radio zones; and continuously communicating with the on-board mobile station at a same communication frequency over the radio zones.

5. The automobile communication method according to claim 4, wherein the plurality of predetermined

FQ5-404

communication frequencies in each radio zone are generated from a single reference frequency in accordance with a predetermined conversion to be in a frequency-coherence state.

5 6. The automobile communication method according to claim 4, wherein a predetermined number N (N is an integer equal to or greater than 2) of time slots are determined in one period in each of the radio zones, wherein one time slot is assigned to a single on-board mobile station and M
10 (M is an integer equal to or greater than 2) predetermined communication frequencies are sequentially switched from one to another at a timing of every N/M time slot.

 7. The automobile communication method according to claim 6, wherein the time slot allocated to the on-board
15 mobile station is switched in such a way that the on-board mobile station uses a same communication frequency over the plurality of radio zones.

 8. The automobile communication method according to claim 4, wherein each of the predetermined communication
20 frequencies is used for both transmission and reception to perform communication with the on-board mobile station according to TDMA/TDD (Time Division Multiple Access/Time

FQ5-404

Division Duplex) scheme.

9. The automobile communication method according to claim 4, wherein the plurality of predetermined communication frequencies in each radio zone are generated from a single reference frequency in accordance with a predetermined conversion to be in a frequency-coherence state, wherein each of the predetermined communication frequencies is used for both transmission and reception to perform communication with the on-board mobile station according to TDMA/TDD (Time Division Multiple Access/Time Division Duplex) scheme.

10. The automobile communication method according to claim 4, wherein the plurality of predetermined communication frequencies comprises a plurality of different pairs of first frequencies and second frequencies, wherein the first frequencies are generated from one reference frequency in accordance with a first predetermined conversion so that the first frequencies are in a frequency-coherence state over the radio zones.

11. The automobile communication method according to claim 10, wherein the on-board mobile station generates a transmission local signal of the second frequency from a

FQ5-404

radio signal received from the fixed station system in accordance with a second predetermined conversion.

12. The automobile communication method according to claim 11, wherein the fixed station system generates a reception local frequency from the first frequency in accordance with the second predetermined conversion as used by the on-board mobile station so that the reception local frequency and a radio signal received from the on-board mobile station are in a frequency-coherence state.

10 13. An automobile communications system comprising:
an on-board mobile station movable on a road;
a plurality of fixed stations forming a plurality of radio zones consecutively arranged on the road, respectively, wherein the fixed stations are communicable
15 with the on-board mobile station using one of a plurality of predetermined communication frequencies; and
a control station controlling communication frequencies used by the plurality of fixed stations at predetermined timing in such a way as not to permit
20 simultaneous transmission at a same communication frequency in adjoining radio zones,
the plurality of fixed stations performing continuous communication with the on-board mobile station

FQ5-404

by allocating different time slots to communications at a same frequency in adjoining radio zones and switching a time slot allocated to the on-board mobile station.

14. The automobile communication system according to claim 13, wherein the time slot allocated to the on-board mobile station is switched from one to another in such a manner that communication with the on-board mobile station is continuously performed at a same communication frequency over the radio zones.

15. The automobile communication system according to claim 13, wherein each of the plurality of fixed stations comprises:

a frequency generator for generating the plurality of predetermined communication frequencies from a signal of a reference frequency inputting from the control station;

a selector for selecting one communication frequency in use from the plurality of predetermined communication frequencies under control of the control station;

a time-division controller for allocating a time slot to communication with the on-board mobile station at the communication frequency in use; and

FQ5-404

an interface for transmission and reception of signals to and from the control station.

16. The automobile communication system according to claim 15, wherein each of the predetermined communication frequencies is used for both transmission and reception to perform communication with the on-board mobile station according to TDMA/TDD (Time Division Multiple Access/Time Division Duplex) scheme.

17. The automobile communication system according to claim 15, wherein the frequency generator generates the plurality of predetermined communication frequencies so that the predetermined communication frequencies are frequency-coherent to the reference frequency wherein each of the predetermined communication frequencies is used for transmission and reception, and wherein the time-division controller performs communication with the on-board mobile station according to TDMA/TDD (Time Division Multiple Access/Time Division Duplex) scheme.

18. The automobile communication system according to claim 15, wherein the plurality of predetermined communication frequencies comprises a plurality of different pairs of first frequencies and second frequencies.

FQ5-404

wherein the frequency generator generates the first frequencies from one reference frequency in accordance with a first predetermined conversion so that the first frequencies are in a frequency-coherence state.

5 19. The automobile communication method according to claim 18, wherein each of the fixed stations generates a reception local frequency from the first frequency in accordance with a second predetermined conversion as used by the on-board mobile station so that the reception local
10 frequency and a radio signal received from the on-board mobile station are in a frequency-coherence state.

20. The automobile communication system according to claim 13, wherein the on-board mobile station comprises:
frequency-in-use regenerator for regenerating the
15 communication frequency in use from a signal received from a fixed station which forms a radio zone for communication;
and

a communication controller controlling communication with the fixed station using the allocated
20 time slot at the communication frequency in use.

21. The automobile communication system according to claim 20, wherein each of the plurality of predetermined

FQ5-404

communication frequencies is used for transmission and reception, and the communication controller carries out communication with the fixed station according to a TDMA/TDD scheme.

5 22. The automobile communication system according to claim 20, wherein each of said plurality of predetermined communication frequencies is used for transmission and reception frequencies,

 wherein the frequency-in-use regenerator
10 comprises:

 a demodulator for demodulating the received signal, and

 a phase controller for performing phase control on a signal of an oscillation frequency based on an output
15 of the demodulator such that the demodulator acquires synchronization; and

 wherein the communication controller carries out communication with the fixed station according to a TDMA/TDD scheme using the oscillation frequency as a
20 transmission local frequency.

 23. The automobile communication system according to claim 20, wherein the frequency-in-use regenerator comprises:

FQ5-404

a demodulator for demodulating the received
signal using an oscillation frequency, and

a phase controller for performing phase control
on the signal of the oscillation frequency based on an
5 output of the demodulator such that the demodulator
acquires synchronization; and

wherein the on-board mobile station further
comprises:

a converter for generating a transmission local
10 frequency from the signal of the oscillation frequency in
accordance with a predetermined conversion, and

a modulator for generating a transmission signal
using the transmission local frequency.

24. The automobile communication system according to
15 claim 23, wherein the predetermined conversion of the
converter is the same as a predetermined conversion for
generating a reception local signal from a transmission
frequency at each fixed station.

25. A fixed station in the automobile communication
20 system as recited in claim 13, comprising:

a communication frequency generator for
generating the plurality of predetermined communication
frequencies from a signal of a reference frequency coming

FQ5-404

from the control station;

a selector for selecting one communication
frequency in use from the plurality of predetermined
communication frequencies under control of the control
5 station;

a time-division controller for allocating a time
slot to communication with the on-board mobile station at
the communication frequency in use; and

an interface for implementing transmission and
10 reception of signals to and from the control station.

26. The fixed station according to claim 25, wherein
each of the plurality of predetermined communication
frequencies is used for transmission and reception, and
communication with the on-board mobile station is carried
15 out according to a TDMA/TDD scheme.

27. The fixed station according to claim 25, wherein
each of the plurality of predetermined communication
frequencies is used for transmission and reception, the
communication frequency generator generates the plurality
20 of predetermined communication frequencies in each radio
zone so that the predetermined communication frequencies
are frequency-coherent to the reference frequency, and the
time-division controller carries out communication with the

FQ5-404

on-board mobile station according to a TDMA/TDD scheme.

28. The fixed station according to claim 25, wherein the plurality of predetermined communication frequencies comprises a plurality of different pairs of a first
5 frequency and a second frequency, and the communication frequency generator generates the first frequency from the reference frequency in accordance with a first predetermined conversion in such a manner that those first frequencies are in a frequency-coherence state over the
10 plurality of radio zones.

29. The fixed station according to claim 25 or 28, wherein the plurality of predetermined communication frequencies comprises a plurality of different pairs of a first frequency and a second frequency, and a reception
15 local frequency for demodulating a received radio signal from the on-board mobile station is generated from the first frequency in accordance with a second predetermined conversion so that the reception local signal is frequency-coherent to the received radio signal from the on-board
20 mobile station.

30. An on-board radio mobile station in the automobile communication system as recited in claim 13,

FQ5-404

comprising:

a frequency-in-use regenerator for regenerating the communication frequency in use from a signal received from a fixed station which forms a radio zone for

5 communication; and

a communication controller for communicating with the fixed station using the allocated time slot based on the communication frequency in use.

31. The on-board radio mobile station according to
10 claim 30, wherein each of the plurality of predetermined communication frequencies is used for transmission and reception, and the communication controller carries out communication with the fixed station according to a TDMA/TDD scheme.

32. The on-board radio mobile station according to
15 claim 30, wherein each of the plurality of predetermined communication frequencies is used for transmission and reception;

wherein the frequency-in-use regenerator
20 comprises:

a demodulator for demodulating the received signal, and

a phase controller performing phase control on a

FQ5-404

signal of an oscillation frequency based on an output of the demodulator such that the demodulator acquires synchronization; and

wherein the communication controller carries out communication with the fixed station according to a TDMA/TDD scheme by using the oscillation frequency as a transmission local frequency.

33. The on-board radio mobile station according to claim 30, wherein the frequency-in-use regenerator comprises:

a demodulator for demodulating a received signal of an oscillation frequency, and

a phase controller performing phase control on the signal of the oscillation frequency based on an output of the demodulator such that the demodulator acquires synchronization; and

wherein the on-board radio mobile station further comprises:

a converter for generating a transmission local frequency from the signal of the oscillation frequency in accordance with a predetermined conversion, and

a modulator for generating a transmission signal using the transmission local frequency.

FQ5-404

34. The on-board radio mobile station according to claim 30, wherein the predetermined conversion of the converter is the same as a predetermined conversion for generating a reception local signal from a transmission
5 frequency at each fixed station.

35. A control station in the automobile communication system as recited in claim 13, comprising:

a reference frequency generator for generating a reference frequency signal for producing the plurality of
10 predetermined communication frequencies in each fixed station;

a communication controller for transmitting and receiving signals to and from the plurality of fixed stations; and

15 a system controller controlling communication frequencies in use by the plurality of fixed stations at predetermined timing in such a way as not to permit simultaneous transmission at a same communication frequency in adjoining radio zones.

FQ5-404

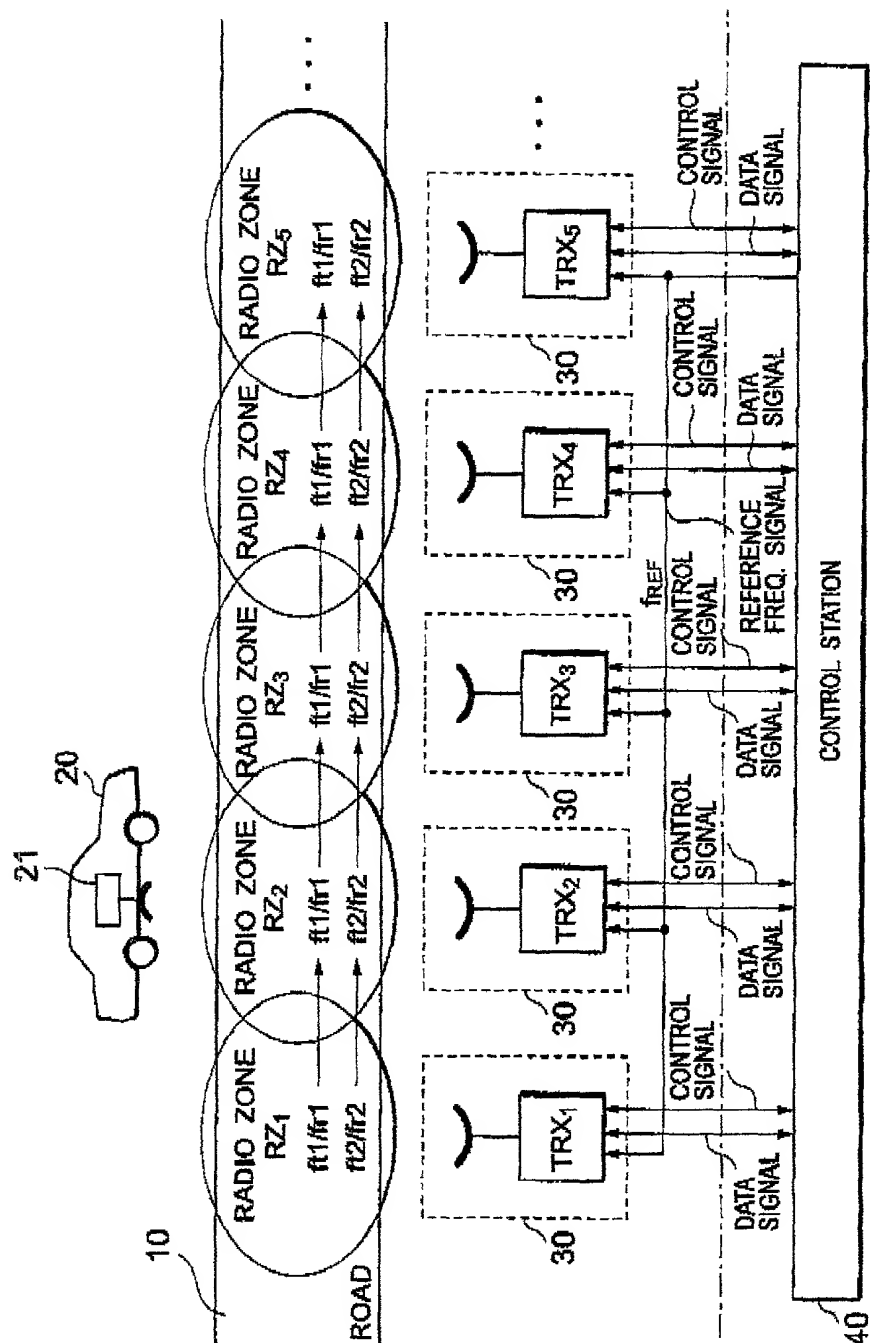
ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An automobile communication system which can ensure fast hand-over without putting unnecessary burden on mobile stations and can adequately handle changes in road condition is disclosed. For each of the radio zones formed by roadside transceivers arranged along a road, a plurality of transmission and reception frequencies f_{t1}/f_{r1} and f_{t2}/f_{r2} are provided. The in-use transmission/reception frequencies in adjoining radio zones are switched at predetermined timing such that they are not permitted to be overlapped. By switching a time slot allocated to the vehicle-mounted transceiver, the vehicle-mounted transceiver can continuously communicate with the roadside transceivers at the same communication frequency over the radio zones.

FQ5-404

1/11

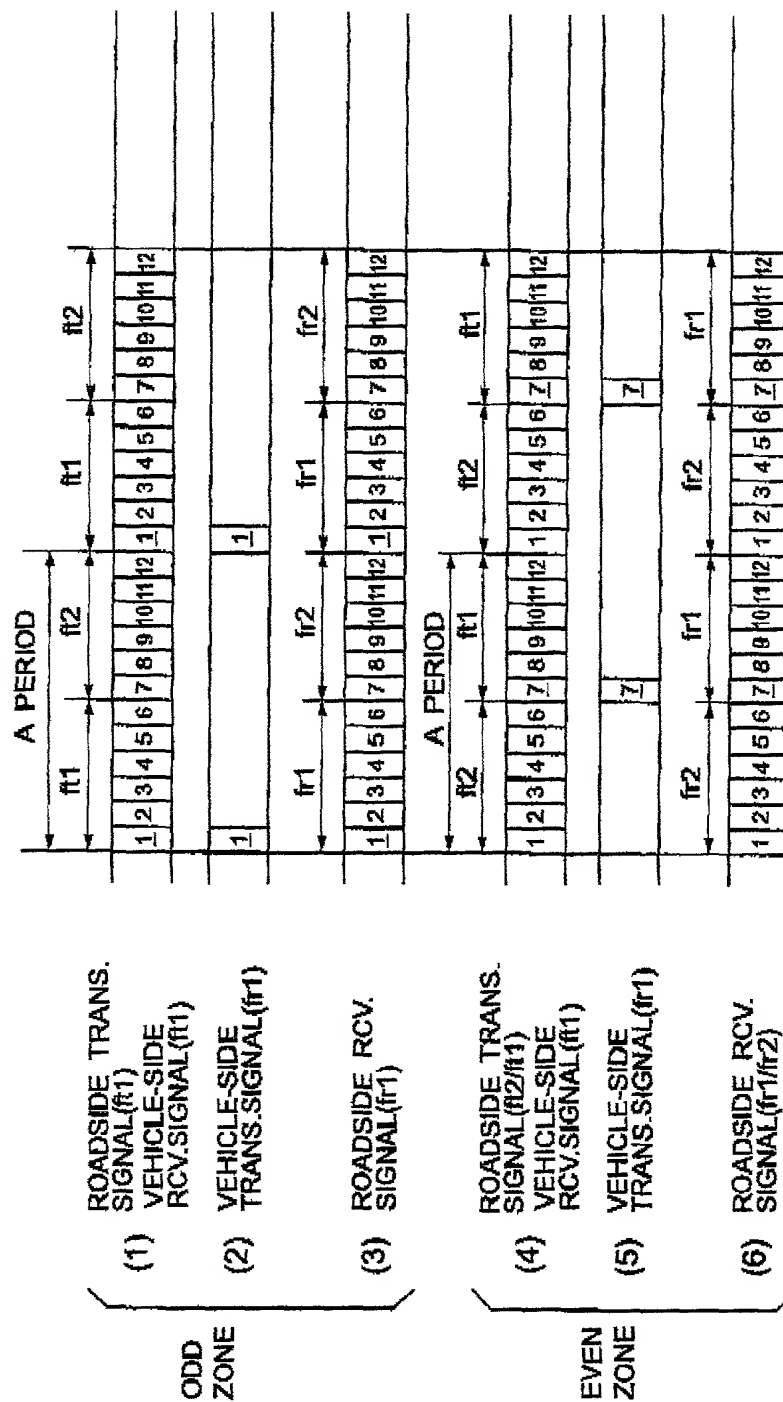
FIG. 1



FQ5-404

2/11

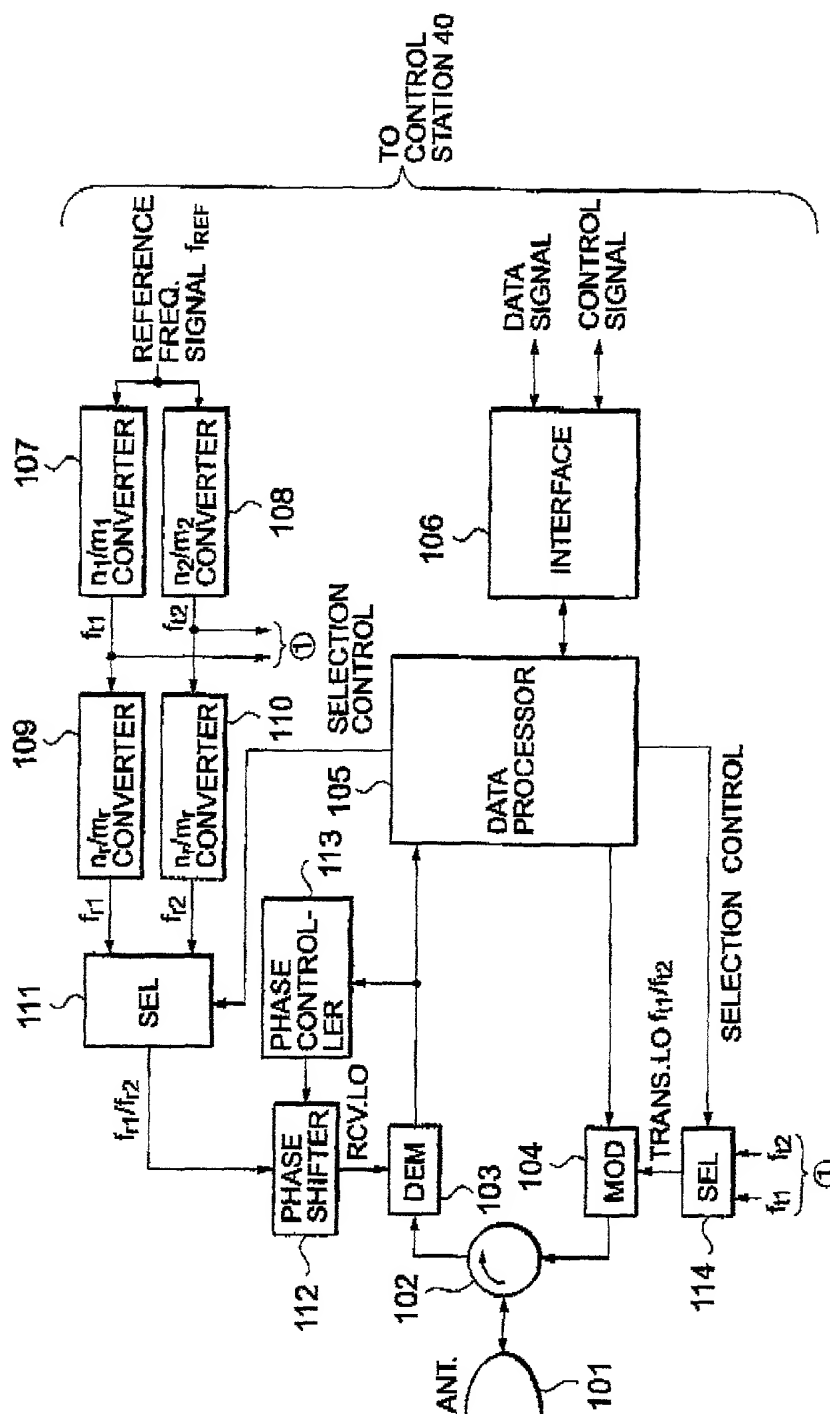
FIG. 2



FQ5-404

3/11

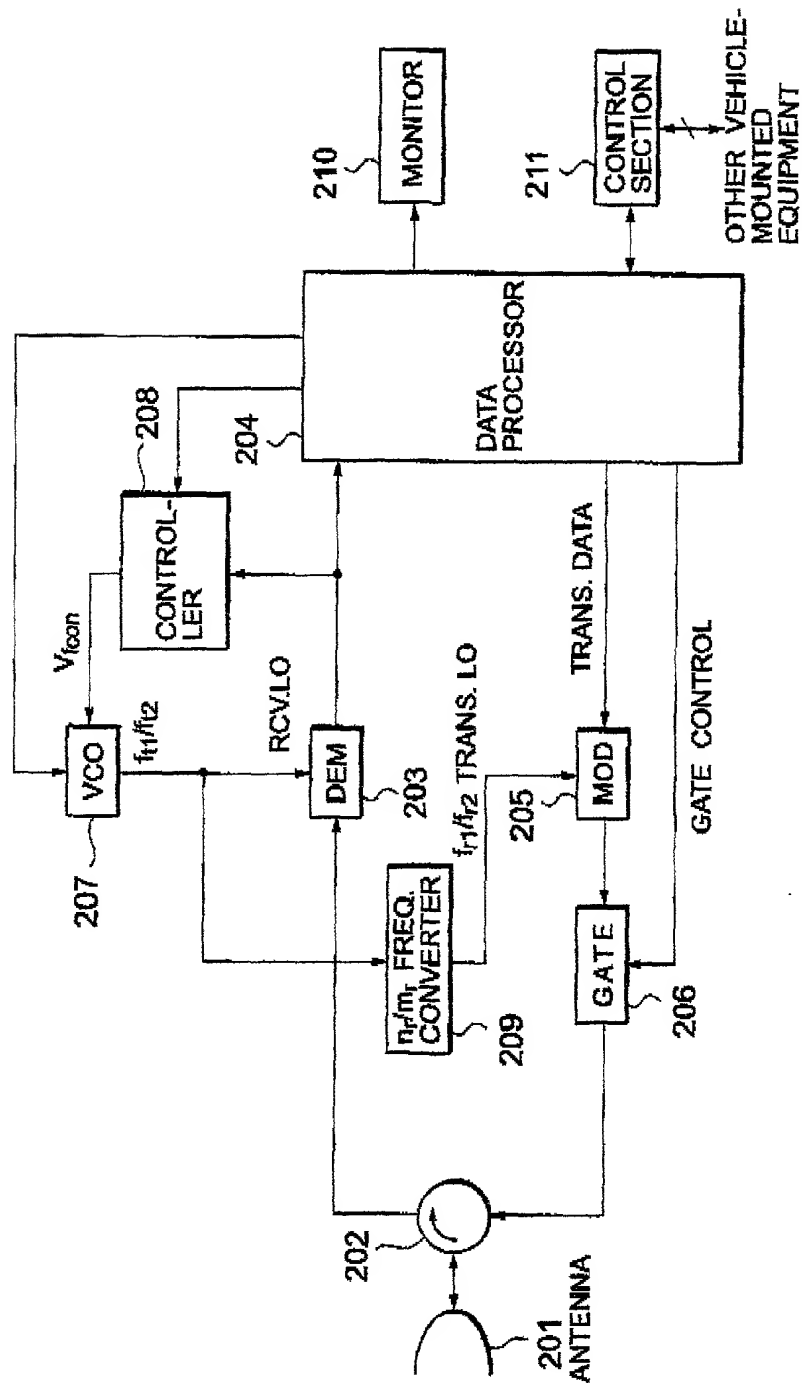
FIG. 3



FQ5-404

4/11

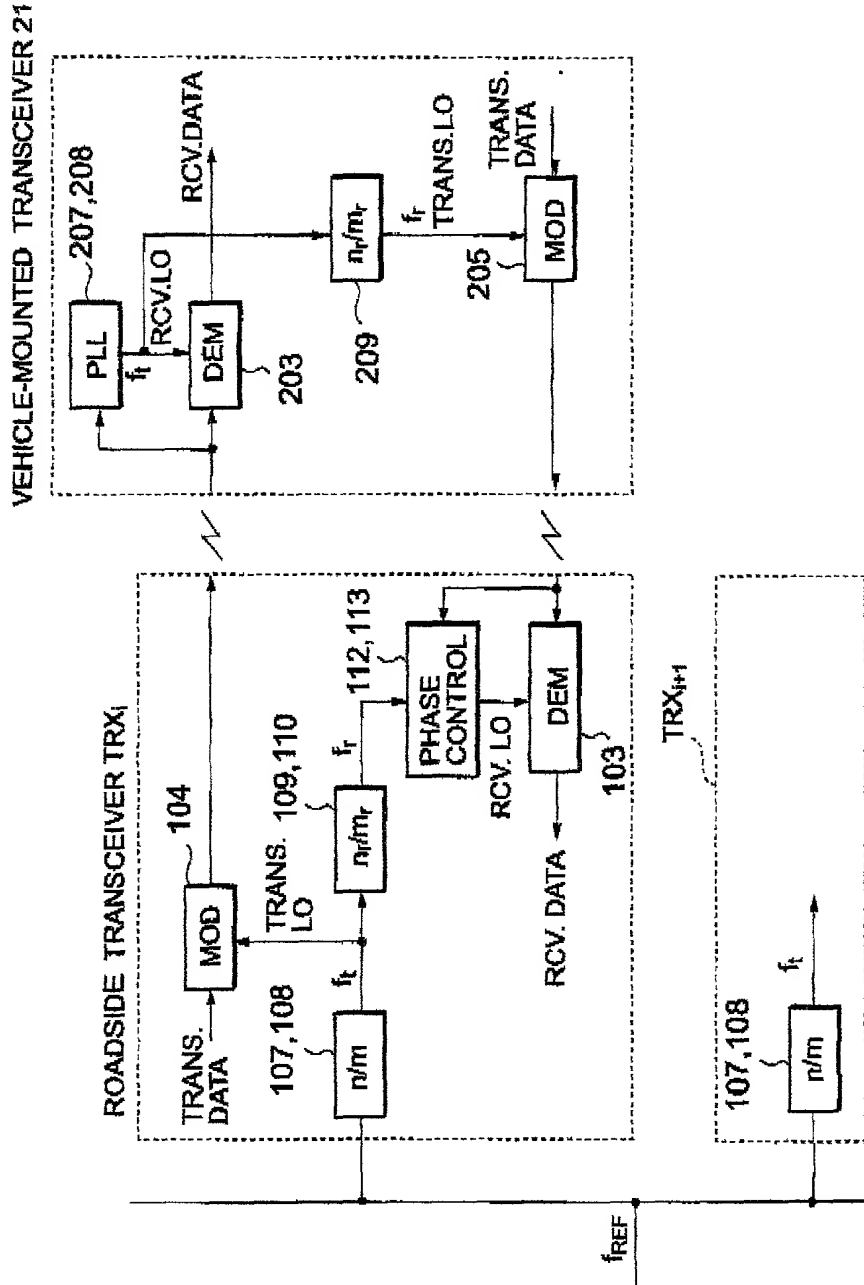
FIG. 4



FQ5-404

5/11

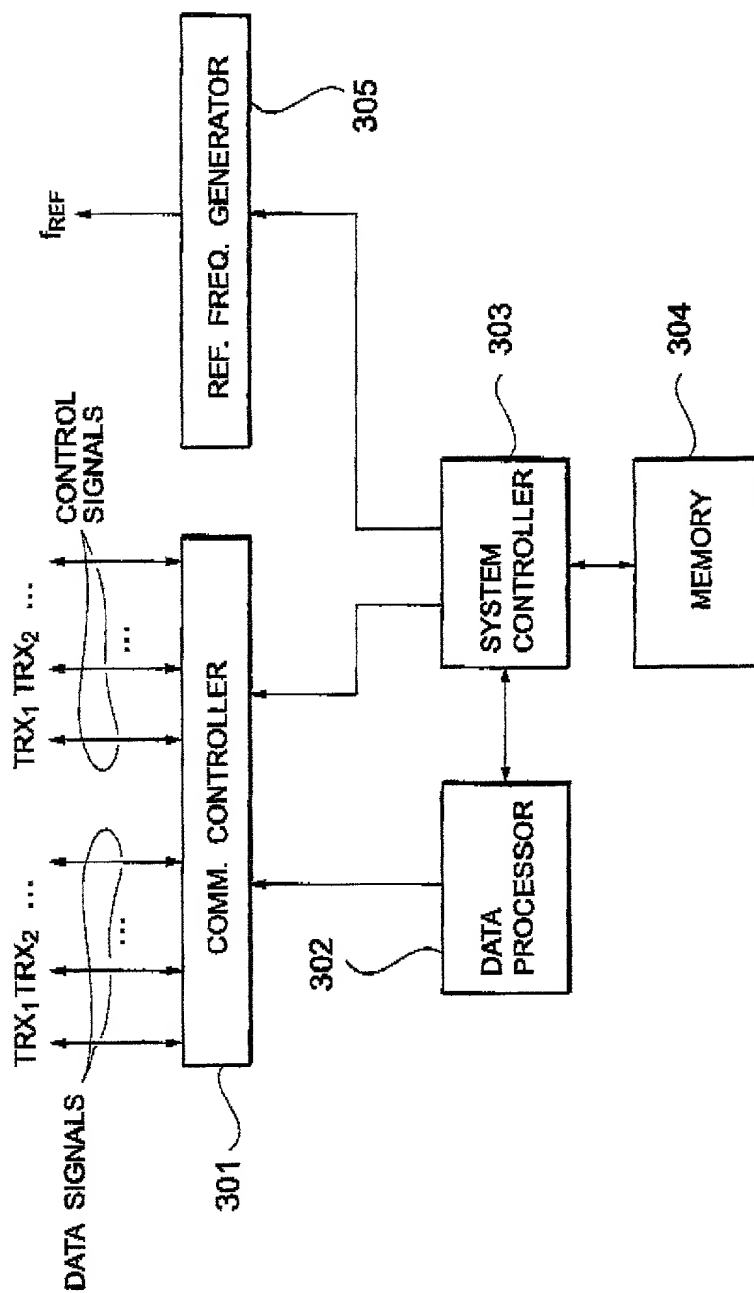
FIG. 5



FQ5-404

6/11

FIG. 6

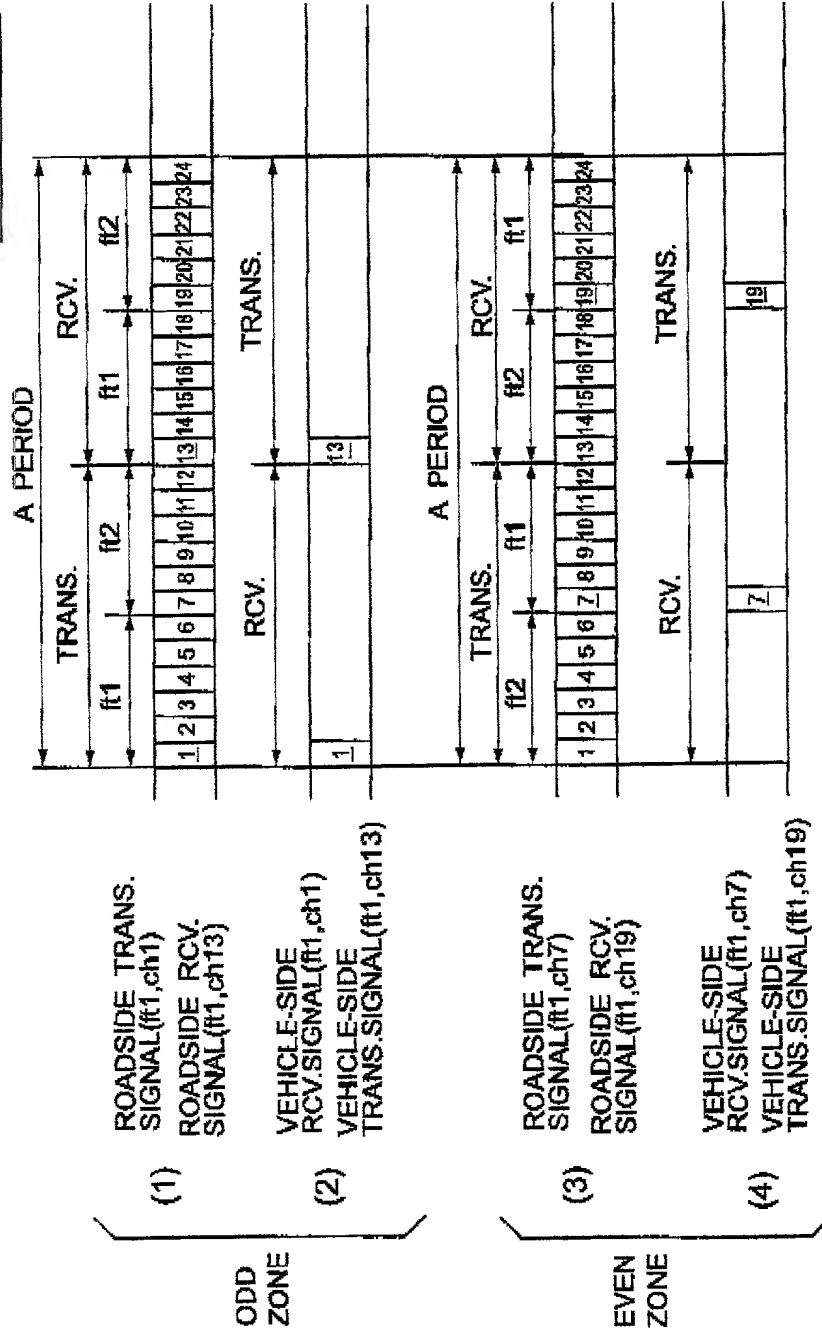


FQ5-404

7/11

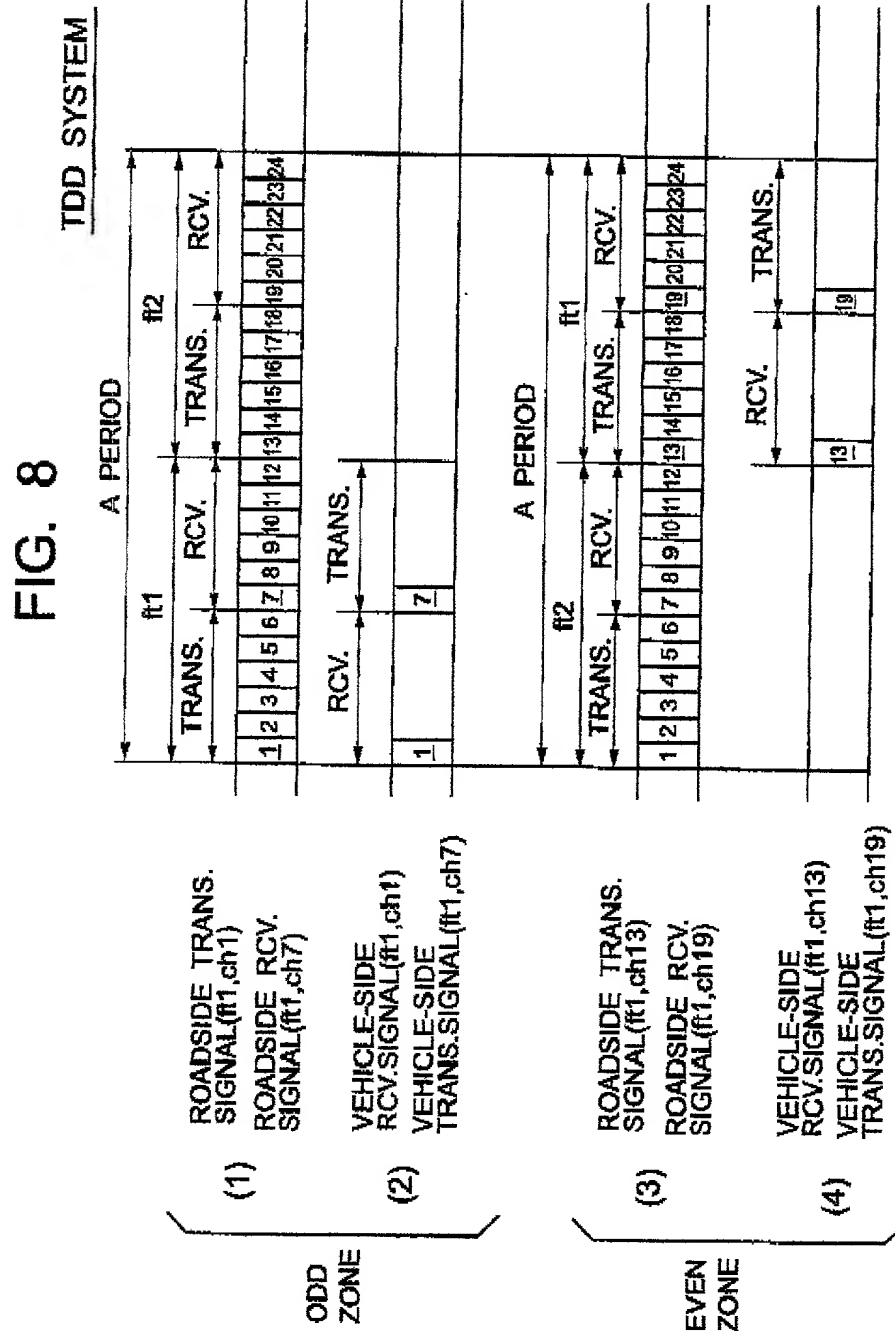
FIG. 7

TDD SYSTEM



FQ5-404

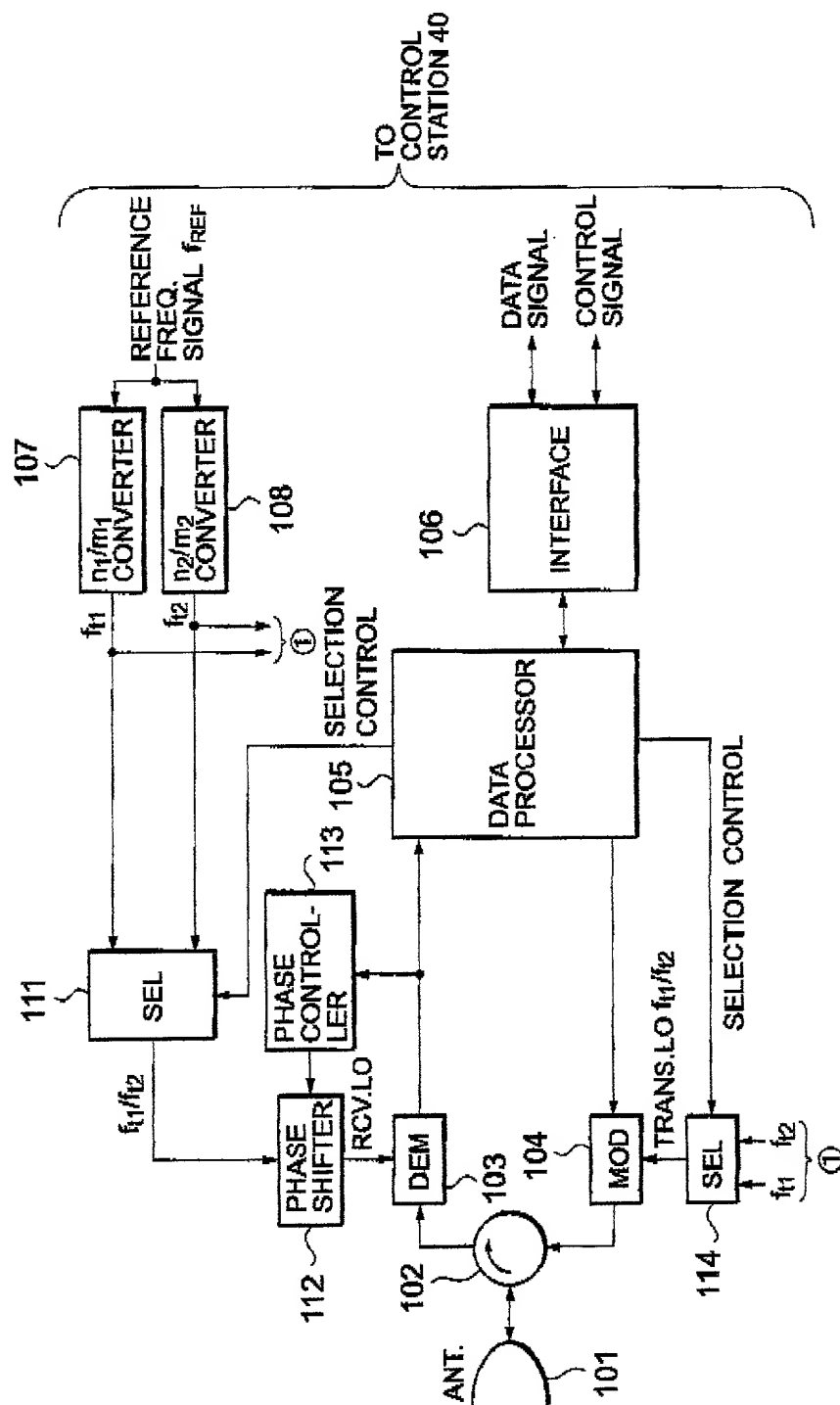
8/11



FQ5-404

9/11

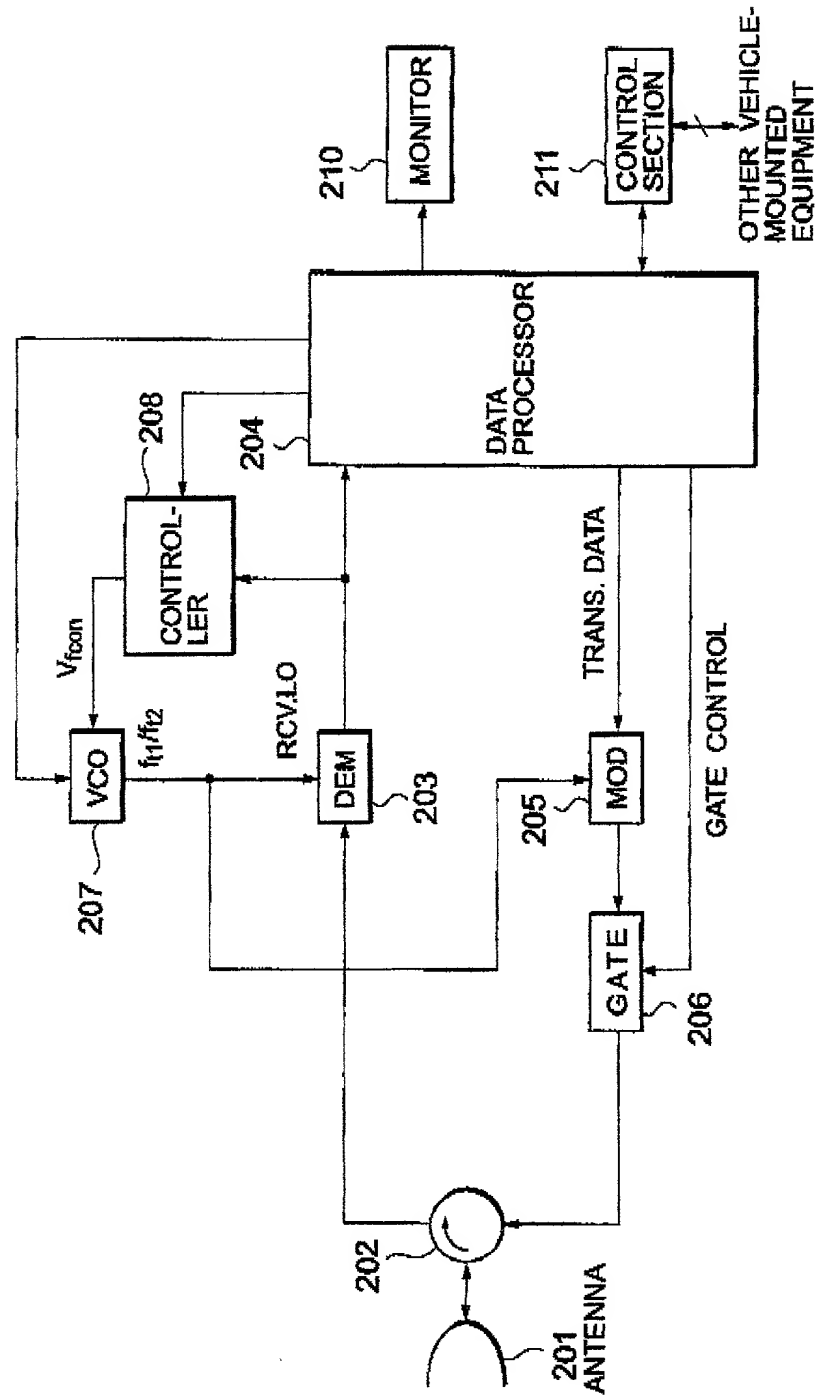
FIG. 9



FQ5-404

10/11

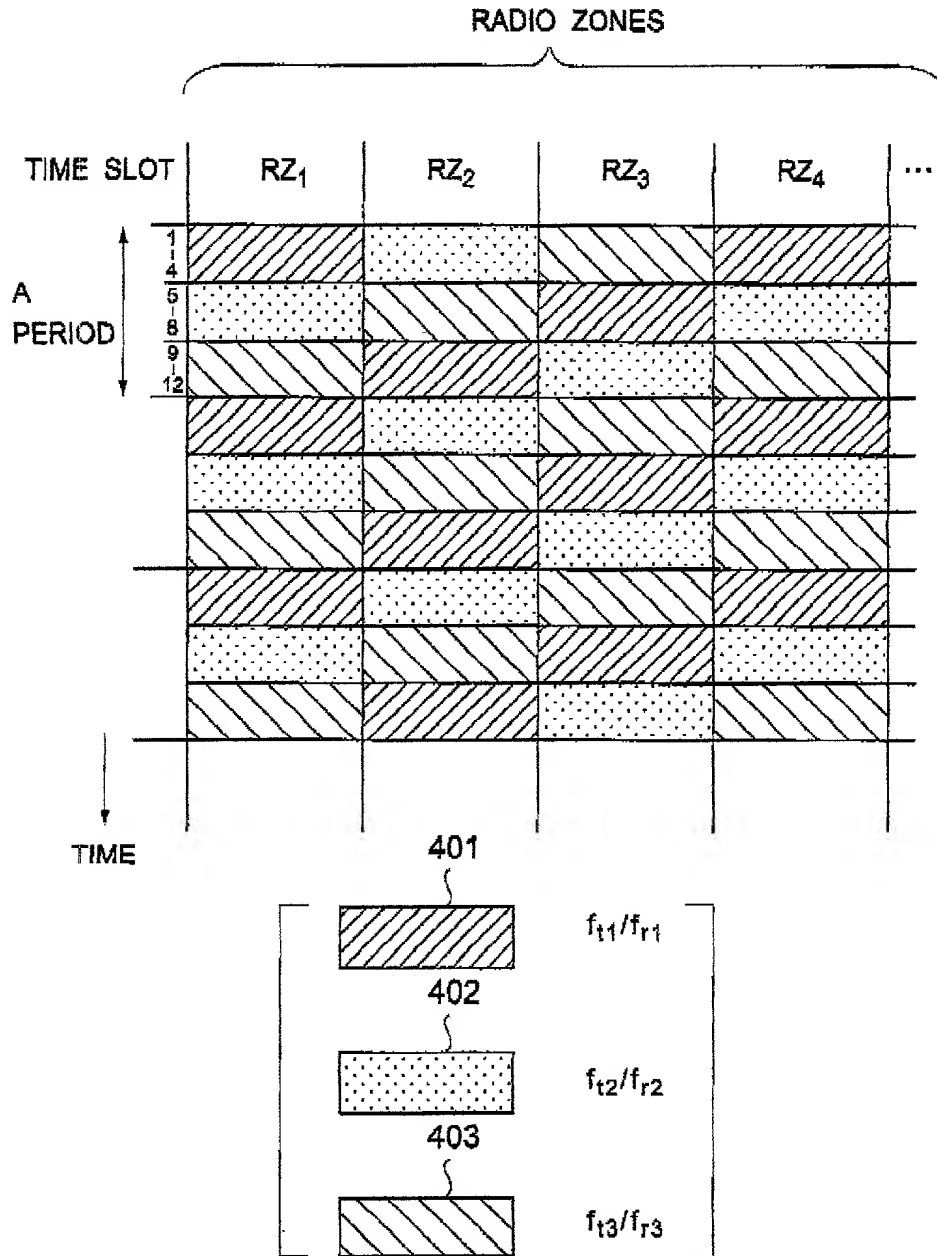
FIG. 10



FQ5-404

11/11

FIG.11



DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name;

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

AUTOMOBILE COMMUNICATIONS METHOD AND SYSTEM

the specification of which:
(check one)

X (is attached hereto)
_____ was filed on _____,
as Application Serial No. _____
and was amended on _____ (if applicable)

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the examination of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56*

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, § 119 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

Prior Foreign Application(s)

			priority claimed	
<u>10-207145</u>	<u>Japan</u>	<u>07/07/1998</u>	<u>X</u>	
(Number)	(Country)	(Day/Month/Year Filed)	yes	no
_____	_____	_____	yes	no
(Number)	(Country)	(Day/Month/Year Filed)		
_____	_____	_____	yes	no
(Number)	(Country)	(Day/Month/Year Filed)		

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, § 120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, § 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose material information as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56 which occurred between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

(Application Serial No.)

(Filing Date)

(Status: patented, pending, abandoned)

Power of Attorney: As a named inventor, I hereby appoint Sean M. McGinn, Reg. No. 34, 386, and Frederick W. Gibb, III, Reg. No. 37,629, as attorneys and/or agents to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith. All correspondence should be directed to **McGinn & Gibb, P.C., 1701 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 100, Arlington, Virginia 22209**. Telephone calls should be directed to McGinn & Gibb, P.C. at (703) 294-6699.

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Full Name of Sole
or First Inventor Yasuharu Yoshida

Inventor's Signature _____ Date _____

Residence Tokyo, Japan

Citizenship Japanese

Post Office Address c/o NEC Corporation, 7-1, Shiba 5-chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan

Full Name of Second
Joint Inventor, If Any _____

Inventor's Signature _____ Date _____

Residence _____

Citizenship _____

Post Office Address _____

Full Name of Third
Joint Inventor, If Any _____

Inventor's Signature _____ Date _____

Residence _____

Citizenship _____

Post Office Address _____

Full Name of Fourth
Joint Inventor, If Any _____

Inventor's Signature _____ Date _____

Residence _____

Citizenship _____

Post Office Address _____

(An additional sheet(s) is/are attached hereto if the present invention includes more than four inventors.)

*Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56:

(a) A patent by its very nature is affected with a public interest. The public interest is best served, and the most effective patent examination occurs when, at the time an application is being examined, the Office is aware of and evaluates the teachings of all information material to patentability. Each individual associated with the filing and prosecution of a patent application has a duty of candor and good faith toward the Patent and Trademark Office, which includes a duty to disclose to the Office all information known to that individual to be material to patentability as defined in this section. The duty to disclose information exists with respect to each pending claim until the claim is canceled or withdrawn from consideration, or the application becomes abandoned.

(b) Under this section, information is material to patentability when it is not cumulative to information already of record or being made of record in the application, and (1) it establishes by itself or in combination with other information, a prima facie case of unpatentability; or (2) it refutes, or is inconsistent with, a position the applicant takes in: (i) opposing an argument of unpatentability relied on by the Office, or (ii) asserting an argument of patentability.